wishing it had been done in the style of our article upon groining in the same number—(the 19th). Since this we have been to see the progress of the works ourselves, and have carefully scanned the paragraph in question, and we regret that errors and loose description of the sort referred to should creep into the pages of what should be a practical, and on such matters, a correct work. We shall endeavour to remedy this by a treatment of the subject ourselves, provided we can have permission from the authorities and the goodwill of the parties concerned, of which we make little doubt. It must be in the highest degree agreeable to communicate matter of interest to their fellow-brethren of the same craft, and through the pages of a work legitimately devoted to conveying information and instruction to them.

KEENE'S PATENT MARBLE CEMENT.

Seeing that our advertisement pages have been occupied so long in reference to this material, and that the public attention, particularly in this metropolis, has been still longer fixed upon and become familiar with it, it presses upon us as a duty to our numerous readers to make them acquainted with something more of its qualities and properties than a mere advertisement reveals. Our sense of duty, we trust, is one which, as we have said before, will not be misinterpreted; we are resolved to puff nothing into notice, but we are bound to say what we think to be just of every valuable commodity, new or old—and the more necessary if new; our readers and the building public have a right to demand it of us; their interests are dependent on a right knowledge and appreciation of materials and methods, and therefore we gladly take occasion, though late, to do our best in bringing before their notice such particulars as we have gleaned concerning Keene's Marble Cement.

Of its component parts it may be somewhat satisfactory to know, and we are indebted to the candour of Messrs. White and Sons, the proprietors, in being able to state, sufficient on that head: they are sulphate of lime (gypsum) and sulphate of alumina (alum), which by a particular process of burning, saturation, and re-burning, are intimately mixed together, and then ground to a powder.

It should be understood that there are two qualities of cement, fine and coarse. It is possible, we know, by great efforts of niceness of workmanship and careful process to make many very inferior productions appear most attractive, and in some instances beautiful; but really we have seen things produced in this cement so exquisitely beautiful as to stretch one's credulity, if it were not upon the best evidence. A delicate piece of bas-relief was presented to our inspection, the execution, texture, polish—enamel we may call it—tint and all, were to our minds more of the character of the purest working in ivory, than of any factitious material like this—incredible it did certainly seem to us, and to have been produced from a mould! but that mould we were informed was an elastic one, after the French mode; and with this solution of our difficulty our incredulity vanished.

This fine quality of cement can have little more said as to what it is susceptible of than we have just noted, for it will be inferred that with this as a climax, it has, like all other plastic agents, its full range of inferior applicabilities—provided earths and metallic oxides are used as colouring matter, it will receive them, and facilitate the production of an endless variety of imitations of the precious marbles, mosaics, &c., and it will equally admit of a variety of new devices—but, above all things, is its power or susceptibility of polish—this, united to its whiteness, hardness, and closeness, gives the nearest approximation to statuary marble we ever beheld.

The coarse quality is used as a stucco, and for running mouldings, in lieu of common plaster, and even of wood. We cannot write this of it without a painful shrug or twitching, to think that another of the hundred and one competitors of the poor carpenter's craft is thus springing into existence, but so it is; skirtings, architraves, panel mouldings, and the like are produced in it, at a cost, we are told, under that of wood-work; and when we take into consideration its durable character, resisting alike decay and combustion, and find that, like wood almost, it may be painted within a few days of its application, especially if laid upon laths and battening, we think we have conjured up, or had conjured up to us, a formidable rival, where rivalry was least welcome, and where the inroads of previous competition had before worked their tide of mischief.

The coarse cement we have seen also applied for floors; there is a floor at Mr. Mark's repository, Langham-place, upon which the carriages run, and to all appearance it is as hard, and certainly equal in beauty to Portland stone; for entrance halls, therefore, and for churches, it is undoubtedly a valuable acquisition, since it is said to be in cost something less than one-half that of Portland stone.

While we are on the subject of flooring, we must not omit to observe the point before adverted to, that is as to colour: the insertion of this in pattern, admits of every variety of imitation, from the minute tessera to the more expanded diamond and squares in pavement.

A great advantage in working Keene's Marble Cement is the greater facility which it gives to the operator by the more gradual setting and hardening, as compared with Roman Cement; and this, besides, prevents waste: for rendering, lime and hair will do, and, as a stucco, the cement will receive an equal part of sand. Care must be taken to mix no more water in the use of it than will bring it to the consistence of a stiff mortar.

We have mentioned one instance of its use as a floor, which we have ourselves seen, besides which we may add, that it is used for the same purpose in the French Protestant Church, in Aldersgate Street, where also the shafts of the piers are stuccoed with it in imitation of stone; the floor of the fire-proof offices in Shorter's Court, Throgmorton Street, the entrance to the Exchequer Bill Office, Whitehall, &c. &c., are also laid with it.

As a stucco, also, it has been used extensively in the recent improvements in the Guildhall, London, in the Hall of Commerce, Threadneedle Street, for pilasters, bases, skirtings, &c. In the normal schools, Borough-road, Southwark; at Greenwich and Chelsea Hospitals; in the alterations of the Duke of Norfolk's Mansion, St. James's Square, and in several of the Government works, both in and out of the metropolis. But we should multiply the instances without end, if we were to go on enumerating them, for the material is now in almost constant requisition among the better class of builders and buildings.

METROPOLITAN BUILDING ACT.

"TO THE HONOURABLE THE COMMONS OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND, IN PARLIAMENT ASSEMBLED.

"The Petition of the undersigned landowners, householders, and builders,

"Humbly sheweth,—That your petitioners have carefully considered the provisions of the Bill now before your honourable House, entitled, 'A Bill for better Regulating Buildings of Metropolitan Districts, and to provide for the Drainage thereof.'

"That an enactment which regulates and controls the domestic economy of between two and three millions of the inhabitants of the metropolitan districts demands the most serious consideration, and requires that an opportunity should be afforded to representatives of all classes who will be affected by it to be heard before a committee of your honourable House.

"That, in the opinion of your petitioners, the objects sought to be provided for by the Bill are threefold, viz.—

"1. The prevention of fire, by the erection of party-walls and external walls of a requisite thickness.

"2. Compelling more substantial erections by prescribing the minimum scantling of timber to be used.

"3. Sanatory regulations for securing proper ventilation and drainage.

"That the first object, *the prevention of fire*, is sufficiently provided for by the Building Act of the 14 George III., cap. 78, which will be repealed by the present Bill; and your petitioners humbly submit that, although this Act is, in some respects, open to objection from its ambiguity, yet that it has been so effectual in securing the object for which it was mainly intended, that your petitioners firmly believe there is scarcely a single instance on record of fire having been communicated from one house to another where there was a party-wall built according to the regulations of the Act. Your petitioners therefore humbly submit, that the enactments contained in the Bill now in progress, requiring an unnecessary consumption of building-ground, by the unreasonable thickness prescribed for party-walls and flues, will be very injurious and oppressive, particularly in their application to fourth-rate houses, and will, in fact, operate to prevent entirely the rebuilding of houses included in that rate by the Act now in force.

"That with reference to the second object of the proposed Bill, *compelling more substantial erections*, your petitioners humbly submit that no cases of failure and consequent danger to life, from a deficiency of strength in the timbers used, have arisen in the numerous buildings recently erected in and about the metropolis, such as to call for the interference of the legislature between the landowner and the builder, in the mode proposed by clauses 43, 44, 45, 46, and 47 of the proposed Bill; and that the obligation thus imposed upon the district surveyor, of interfering with internal structure, not only at the first building, but on all subsequent alterations, cannot fail to be extremely vexatious, and productive of much unnecessary inconvenience in its operation, and that, in addition, the scantlings prescribed for the several bearings are extravagant in their dimensions.

"That the *sanatory Regulations*, which are the third object of the Bill, will be, in the judgment of your petitioners, much impeded, and in a great measure defeated, by the clauses hereinbefore referred to. The provisions of the Bill, by greatly increasing the cost of erection, will compel the builder to place more houses in a given space, to cover his ground-rent, or to lay upon them so heavy a rent as will exclude from their occupation that class of mechanics, clerks, and labouring persons by whom a large portion of this description of houses is now tenanted.

"That in many cases these clauses must operate to prevent altogether the erection of small houses in the suburbs of London, for the accommodation of the increasing population, which will not only throw out of employment a numerous body of mechanics and labourers, but will compel the present occupiers of this class of houses to resort to lodgings in the already densely-populated places where the lower classes reside, or will introduce into the neighbourhood of the metropolis the system of erecting large tenements or barracks, and of letting them out in floors, a system highly prejudicial, not only to the health and comfort, but to the morals of the inhabitants.

"That, in the opinion of your petitioners, the regulations relative to drainage and sewers will involve powers conflicting with those at present vested in the Commissioners of Sewers; the regulations relative to the rebuilding of houses, and the clauses interfering with large warehouses and premises, must be productive of much injury and oppression, and in many cases occasion a total forfeiture of property; and the clauses creating three new officers, under the title of official referees, and prescribing the fees to be paid to and the duties to be discharged by them and the district surveyors, will have the effect of promoting frequent and vexatious litigation—the powers given being very arbitrary and unusual, and the fees not only excessively high, but calculated on an uncertain and erroneous principle.

"Your petitioners, therefore, humbly pray that your honourable House will refer the said Bill to a select committee of your honourable House, before whom your petitioners, or parties duly authorized to represent them, may be heard."

IPSWICH CUSTOM-HOUSE.

A Correspondent writes, "Probably some of your readers would be able to tell me, why the Ipswich Custom-house Committee opened the letters of the competing architects, thereby infringing their own 'Instructions,' as they said the letters would be returned unopened."

Extensive Roof.—Messrs. Thornton & Co. have just completed the roof of the new shed at the railway station, which is acknowledged by architects to be the best piece of slating in Hull. The weight of the roof is 115 tons.—*Hull Packet.*

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